

What's Going On?

The Social & Fund-Raising Team Reports

DIARY OF EVENTS

If you would like to attend a Branch event but have no transport, please contact the Social Team and every effort will be made to help you.

- 25 Aug Poppy Appeal Race Day
29 Aug * Trip to Poppy Factory
27 Oct Branch Coffee Morning Harborough Theatre
17 Nov Remembrance Concert
2008
1 Mar Branch Coffee Morning Harborough Theatre
* Lutterworth Branch event, details from Beryl Morgan 01455 552876

For details of RNA events call Mike Middleton on MH 445827.

Lunch at the Angel

Tuesday 21 August

A week earlier due to the Bank Holiday

Join us at noon for our Monthly Get-together and enjoy an excellent meal in good company

Menu

Roast of the Day with Roast Potatoes
or

Chicken Casserole topped with Herb Scone
All served with a selection of vegetables
or

Penne Pasta topped with Mediterranean Vegetable and Tomato Sauce

Followed by

Homemade Bread & Butter Pudding with Creamy Vanilla Custard

or Fresh Fruit Salad with Ice Cream

or Lemon Meringue Pie with Cream

Fresh Coffee and Mints

Please book your place as soon as possible with Wendy Osborne on MH 467636

The Royal British Legion Market Harborough Branch

Reg. Charity 219279

www.mktharbrorbl.ukvet.net

Branch Contact Numbers

Hon. Secretary: Betty Ramsay - 01858 434923

Welfare: Vida Edwards - 0116 279 3729

Poppy Appeal: Caroline Windsor 01858 463660

Social & Fund Raising Team: Pat Middleton, 01858 445827 and Wendy Osborne 01858 467636

The date of the next Branch meeting is

September 12

Meetings are held on the Second Wednesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the Function Room at the Conservative Club, Fairfield Road, Market Harborough. The Committee meets in the same room on the Thursday preceding the Branch Meeting at 7.00 pm.

In Touch

www.in-touch.ukvet.net

THE MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER OF THE
MARKET

HARBOROUGH
BRANCH OF THE
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION
Founded 1996

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The Royal British Legion

Market Harborough Branch

In Touch

Issue 107

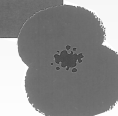
August 2007

A Confession by the Editor

I apologise for the reduced content of this edition, which is due to me skiving off on my jollies.



THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



A Scrap of Paper

By
Bernard Halsall

Some years ago I was able to visit the RAF Museum at Hendon, and a worthwhile visit it was. On leaving, the commissionaire asked me if I had enjoyed the visit, and I told him that I had, although the aircraft I most wished to see was not there. Without prompting he said, "You mean the Halifax". "Not one remained that could be repaired", he said, "although I believe they have found one in a fjord in Norway. But it will be difficult to salvage." I heard nothing more of the Halifax and presumed it had not been recovered.

Then, a few months ago, I received a letter that got me involved again personally with a Handley Page Halifax Bomber. The letter reported that the Halifax had been salvaged successfully - what remained of it after over 50 years at the bottom of the lake - and had been transferred at great expense to Trenton, Ontario. This task was undertaken by the Halifax Aircraft Association (H.A.A.) in Canada, which then set about reconstructing the plane. Scarce parts have been sought, manufactured or bought from many sources, but mainly from UK. The project is due to be completed in 2001, and is to become a memorial to the 10,000 Canadians who lost their lives whilst flying a Halifax bomber.

The letter went on to say this particular aircraft was numbered NA 337 and had been delivered in March, 1945 to RAF 644 Squadron at Tarrant Rushton. Furthermore they had found that it had been used to pull a Hamilcar Glider on the Rhine Crossing (Operation Varsity) for its first operational flight. And the letter went on to say that the glider was one of twenty, each carrying a 17pdr A/T Gun, its lorry and crew. These twenty carried Chalk Nos. from 239 to 258. The Canadians were keen to find out the

name of the Glider Pilot who was pulled by NA337. I looked up my old log book - my Chalk No. had been 248 - but there was no record of the name of the Tug Pilot.

I still have one or two contacts, and I put out appeals without much hope - it is all so long ago. Last week I received a sheaf of Photostats, none of which gave me the answer. But amongst them was one foolscap sheet, all hand written, obviously as events occurred, from the Control Tower, and headed "Special Mission - 24.3.45". It listed the Aircraft Flight Number, the Pilot's name, take-off time (to the nearest second), ETA to target, Release time and return time to base.

There had been 38 Halifax and 36 Gliders lined up for take-off - 2 Halifax were "spare". Each glider weighed just over 21 tons. Take-off was fixed for 0730 hrs. All tug engines would be fired by 0710 hrs (all 152 of them!) and the first "train" is recorded on the sheet as "Take-off 0719 hrs. By 0725 hrs, 05 seconds 16 trains were airborne, and the lift off was completed by 0739 hrs 50 seconds.



The Control Tower record sheet also included such entries as "Tug returned to base 0745/45 starboard outer U/S", "Returned early with rope - no glider", "Burst tyre on landing" and three "Did not Return". From all these entries I found P-X 337 was flown by F/O Turnbull, who pulled Chalk No. 253 - but no entry of any Glider Pilots' names. (Incidentally, I found that I had been towed by A-V, Pilot Ft/Lt Johnson, and we were airborne at 0725.15).

As I read through this scrap of paper I was taken back the full 54 years to relive, once again, the excitement, and the tension, and the fear.

NA. 337 went missing returning from a successful dropping mission, code name Crop 17, on the mountain near Groe, 80 miles NE of Oslo. NA337 was hit by flak at the head of Lake Mjosa around 0130 hrs on Tuesday, 24th April, 1945. Only the Rear Gunner, F/Sgt Tom Weightman survived. The Pilot was F/Lt Alexander Turnbull, D.F.C. The crew lies buried in the War Cemetery at Lillehammer.

Escalating Security Levels

**Just a Bit
of Fun**

*With no wish to upset
our European friends -
honestly!*

As you may be aware, we English are feeling the pinch in relation to recent terrorist threats and have raised our security level from "Miffed" to "Peeved."

Soon, though, security levels may be raised yet again to "Irritated" or even "A Bit Cross". Londoners have not been "A Bit Cross" since the blitz in 1940 when tea supplies all but ran out.

Terrorists have been recategorized from "Tiresome" to "A Bloody Nuisance". The last time the British issued a "Bloody Nuisance" warning level was during the great fire of 1666.

Also, the French government announced yesterday that it has raised its terror alert level from "Run" to "Hide". There are only two higher levels in France: "Surrender" and "Collaborate". This rise was precipitated by a recent fire that destroyed France's white flag factory, effectively paralysing the country's military capability.

It's not only the English and French that are on a heightened level of alert. Italy has increased its alert level from "Shout Loudly and Excitedly" to "Elaborate Military Posturing". Two more levels remain: "Ineffective Combat Operations" and "Change Sides".

The Germans also increased their alert state from "Disdainful Arrogance" to "Dress in Uniform and Sing Marching Songs". They also have two higher levels: "Invade a Neighbour" and "Lose".

The Belgians, on the other hand, are all on holiday as usual, and the only threat they are worried about is NATO pulling out of Brussels.

The Spanish are all very excited to see their new submarines ready to deploy. These beautifully designed subs have glass bottoms so the new Spanish navy can get a really good look at the old Spanish navy.